



Childcare Inspection Report on

Susan Coombs

Cardiff



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Description of the service

The child minder is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to care for up to five children under the age of 12 years. She is a well-established child minder who operates her business from the family home in Fairwater, Cardiff. She lives with her husband and adult daughter. The service runs Monday to Friday from 7.00am to 6.00pm and is delivered through the English language.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children enjoy attending this service and they are relaxed and comfortable in the child minder's home. The child minder is responsive to their needs and provides a variety of activities for them, taking their preferences into account. The children benefit from a clean and well-maintained environment with resources to suit their age ranges. Partnerships with parents are positive and the child minder offers a flexible service for working parents. We made a number of recommendations in respect of the child minder's administration of the service.

2. Improvements

The child minder has achieved the areas highlighted during the last inspection in relation to the statement of purpose and recording dates of smoke alarm tests and fire drills. However, we found that the statement of purpose required further attention, which has now been actioned. The child minder has carried out a number of home improvements since the last inspection. A number of recommendations made during this inspection were also addressed by the time we returned for our second visit and also prior to writing this report. These were:

- Expanding the quality of care review report;
- devising a system to track children's development;
- devising a system to document activity planning;
- introducing a pre-existing injuries template and new accident/incident templates;
- recording children's arrival and departure time and recording visitors;
- developing a nappy changing policy and settling in policy and
- creating a template for parents to give permissions for essential matters such as administering first aid and transporting in a vehicle.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We identified one area of non compliance in respect of the statement of purpose (Regulation 15), but we have not issued a non compliance notice on this occasion, as this has been rectified. Further best practice recommendations are reflected in section 5.2 towards the end of this report.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children are able to make choices and are encouraged to express themselves. There is a relaxed atmosphere within the home and children have opportunities to play and have fun. Their individual needs are met by a child minder who makes efforts to keep them safe and to provide a suitable foundation for their learning and development.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children speak or express themselves well and communicate their needs in a variety of ways. We saw that the child minder understood their preferences and needs and this took precedence over the daily routine. Children approached the child minder confidently to chat or to ask for comfort. They were encouraged to choose what they wanted to play with and were familiar with the choices available. Children we spoke with told us they are regularly asked what they are interested in and what they would like to do next. Children were listened to attentively and given time to make their wishes known.

Children's right to express themselves freely and make independent choices is encouraged by the child minder.

1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?

Children feel safe, happy and valued as they receive consistent, nurturing care. We saw that they were familiar with the environment and with routines, which helped them feel content. For example, they knew when it was time to go to the table for a snack or to tidy their toys away. Most children attending the service have done so for several years. Strong bonds were evident and children felt valued as they were listened to and their opinions were respected by the child minder. A parent we spoke with told us that their child is treated like "part of an extended family" and that their child is "safe and well-looked after."

Children feel safe and happy with a child minder they have a positive relationship with, in an environment they are familiar with.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children interact and co-operate well with their peers and adults, and younger children are learning to express their needs. We heard children regularly saying please and thank you and they were consistently praised for positive behaviour, working together or being kind to their friends. We saw children of different ages interacting warmly with each other after school; children were calm and relaxed in the home environment and

they had obvious friendship bonds with each other. One child told us that one of the things they like about the service is “having friends here from other schools.”

Children interact appropriately for their age and stage of development and have positive relationships with the child minder and one another.

1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?

Children enjoy and are engaged in their play and can also relax and have quiet times. Children have access to activities and resources which are appropriate for their age and stage of development. We observed a balance of both self directed and adult directed play for children to choose from. Children at times played alone and were content. We saw a younger child thrilled to be able to make as many cardboard snowmen as they wanted! The child minder told us that when the older children are in school, she visits toddler groups, the library or play areas to broaden children’s social experiences. An older child attending after school told us that they are able to watch television if they are tired after school, or play with the other children attending. Children also told us that they go on trips during school holidays to places such as soft play places, the local splash park and the museum.

Children enjoy a range of play and learning experiences at the child minder’s home and benefit from accessing community facilities regularly.

1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?

Children are developing their confidence and independence. They benefit from opportunities to engage in different play experiences which enable them to gain a good range of skills, learn, be independent and follow their interests. The child minder was on hand to provide assistance if needed or to extend the children’s play. An example of this was when a child was happy playing independently, the child minder allowed them the space to explore and progress their own play. When they needed support, to cut hair to stick onto a snowman, the child minder engaged and supported them to do this. At tea time, the children sat together around the dining table chatting about their day and children needed little reminding to use good manners when eating. When a child approached the child minder to tell her they had finished eating, the child minder asked “Can you put your plate out the kitchen for me then please?” which the child happily did.

Children learn well and develop confidence and independence with a child minder who encourages them to do things for themselves and gives them time to carry out their chosen activities/tasks.

2. Care and Development

Summary

The child minder is nurturing, she enjoys her work and has many years of experience in this field. She has established adequate systems and procedures in order to offer a beneficial service to children in her care. The child minder knows children well and supports them in their day to day activities, to help them to reach their full potential. Some improvements are required.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

The child minder understands her responsibilities in respect of keeping children safe and healthy. She was able to demonstrate an adequate knowledge of the signs of abuse and neglect, the procedure to record and where to seek advice if she has concerns. The child minder completed an on line child protection training course in April 2017. We saw that there was a child protection policy in place, but it did not contain a reference to the Prevent duty, which is a government strategy to protect children from extremism and radicalisation. The child minder implements good practice in relation to healthy eating and lifestyles to improve outcomes for children, such as ensuring children are physically active where possible and providing nutritious meal and snack options. The child minder completed a Level 2 award in food safety in November 2018. A medication policy is in place and we noted that medication is only given with prior written permission from parents. The child minder has completed on line training in first aid and stated that she feels confident to administer emergency medication if/when necessary. We discussed attending face-to-face training when it is next due.

The child minder keeps children safe and healthy as a result of the systems in place.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

The child minder models good behaviour by being polite and respectful to children and working in line with her behaviour management policy. We observed her using soft tones, listening to the children and using positive language appropriate to individual children. We saw that the child minder interacted well with the children and encouraged them to co-operate with each other. When a child became upset as the Christmas tree decorations she was painting did not turn out as she wanted, she reassured them by saying "That is fantastic, but if you want to paint another one, you can." Our discussions also indicated that she considered the age and developmental stage of children and understood that these factors can affect children's behaviour. We heard the child minder praising children for good manners and behaviour and we noted that she spoke kindly and respectfully to children. There was an informal and relaxed atmosphere in the home.

The child minder supports children in a positive manner to promote their social development.

2.3 How well do practitioners promote children's play, learning and development and meet their individual needs?

The child minder provides a suitable range of activities for the children in her care. She was responsive to children's requests and communication; there was good eye contact and questioning to help understand what children wanted or needed. Throughout the inspection the child minder gave the children choices to help them decide what they wanted. For example, "What would you like to do next? Shall I show you what we've got here?" The child minder told us that she gives parents regular verbal updates on their child, and although children's progress is taken into consideration, it is not documented. We saw that the child minder tends to organise activities in line with events on the calendar, such as St David's Day and Mother's Day. However, planning is not currently documented. There was a large emphasis on free play and doing things she knows different children like. We did not hear any incidental Welsh used during the inspection, but the child minder indicated that she is keen to implement some basic Welsh words and phrases.

The child minder has a good understanding of children's needs but there is scope for development in terms of planning and development tracking.

3. Environment

Summary

The child minder's home is clean and well maintained. Children have use of a lounge/dining room, kitchen and upstairs bathroom. The garden is not used for child minding but children benefit from accessing community resources regularly. Suitable attention is given to safety and security; the child minder ensures that children are well supervised at all times.

Our findings

3.1 How well do leaders ensure the safety of the environment?

The child minder provides a secure environment for children and she is aware of her responsibility in relation to the safety and welfare of children. We found that her home was well-maintained and resources were in good working order. The premises is safe and the front door was kept locked throughout the visit. A record of visitors or a children's register was not being maintained, but this was rectified by the time we returned to complete the inspection. We saw evidence of relevant documentation for use of a car and the child minder told us that she ensures that children have use of a car seat suitable for their individual needs. A fire evacuation drill was recently carried out and appropriately documented, but these were not seen to be undertaken at regular intervals. Smoke alarms, fire extinguishers and first aid kits are in place and are checked regularly. Although the child minder told us that she risk assesses on an ongoing basis, but these are not documented. Appropriate insurance for the home was in place and an annual gas safety check had been undertaken as required

The child minder has some suitable systems in place to promote children's safety.

3.2 How well do leaders ensure the suitability of the environment?

The child minder ensures that her home is clean, secure and welcoming. Rooms are tidy, well decorated and airy. The lounge/dining room and kitchen has very recently been completely refurbished, and the bathroom was also in the process of being refitted. Resources are stored in the lounge/dining room and a selection is brought out each day. The child minder told us that she asks children what they would like out and ensures they have enough to choose from. There is a large dining table for children to enjoy craft and messy play and eat their meals and snacks together.

The child minder provides an environment which is suitable, clean and safe for children's needs.

3.3 How well do leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment?

Children of varying ages have access to good quality play and learning resources. These included musical toys, dolls, cars, books and a good selection of art and craft materials. We noted that resources were well maintained. The child minder told us that

she regularly cleans the toys and immediately discards anything that is broken. One child told us that she enjoyed carving pumpkins for Halloween, that she gets to do lots of arts and crafts and she showed us a card she had been making ready to leave for Santa on Christmas Eve.

The child minder ensures there are good quality resources and equipment available that support and encourage the children's skills and development.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The child minder manages her service adequately. She is motivated, experienced and open to new developments as a means of promoting positive outcomes to children and their families. Partnerships with parents are positive. Some recommendations during the inspection were actioned immediately but some further improvements are required.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The child minder has several policies and procedures in place for her service. However, on our first visit, we did not see a nappy changing policy, settling in policy or templates for parents to give permission for essential matters such as administering first aid and transporting in a vehicle. These were in place by our second visit. We found that her statement of purpose did not contain all the necessary information required by the regulations. We discussed this with the child minder and she expanded the document prior to writing this report so that it complies with requirements. Not all documentation was clearly dated so it was not possible to confirm when they were last reviewed. Parents are provided with information prior to their children starting, to enable them to make a choice about using the service. We looked at a sample of records including children's contracts, some of which needed updating. At the time of the inspection, the service was not registered with the Information Commissioner's Office in relation to storing personal data.

Overall, the service is adequately managed, but improvements are required.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

There is a system in place to review the quality of care and the child minder explained how she gathers children's opinions as they go along. However, we found that the views of parents and children had not been evidenced in the quality of care report, which also needed expanding. The child minder told us that she likes to chat to parents on a day-to-day basis to ensure they feel welcome. A parent confirmed this, telling us that the child minder gives them reassurance about their children's welfare and they know that they are "Safe and well looked after." A complaints policy is in place although this did not accurately reflect contact details for CIW. No complaints have been received.

The child minder evaluates her business to plan for improvement, although this could be more fully evaluated and evidenced.

4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?

The child minder does not employ any staff. Contracts are in place with parents and they are kept well informed of any planned holidays or absences, so that alternative child care arrangements can be made. The child minder renews relevant training certificates to keep up to date with best practise. She has a named emergency backup child minder to care for the children if needed, whom the children are familiar with.

The child minder manages her time and service adequately so that it runs smoothly.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Partnerships with parents are respectful and effective. The child minder speaks to parents daily and has an informal settling in policy which is tailored to individual needs. Parents receive regular verbal feedback and ongoing updates about their children from the child minder. Discussions with the child minder showed that she uses an umbrella organisation website to keep up to date with any changes.

The child minder understands the importance of working in partnership to ensure that children experience the support required to meet their individual needs.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None.

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

The following best practice recommendations were discussed to support the development of the service, as follows:

- Date all documentation;
- embed the newly devised planning system and development tracking system;
- develop the use of incidental Welsh;
- ensure fire drills are carried out at least every six months;
- include information on the Prevent duty in child protection policy;
- implement a risk assessment, which should also include the pet dogs;
- review the complaints policy;
- ensure children's contracts contain correct information and
- ensure that the next paediatric first aid training is a comprehensive face-to-face course.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection, undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections:

- One inspector completed one visit to the service; the inspection was unannounced, although the child minder's availability for the week had been established in advance. In total we spent five hours at the service to observe children and the care they receive;
- observations were carried out indoors to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care provided;
- we reviewed information held by CIW;
- we undertook a visual inspection of the premises;
- we spoke to several children using the service and two parents;
- we looked at a range of records including children's records, the statement of purpose, some policies and procedures and quality of care review and
- we provided feedback to the child minder by telephone following the inspection.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Child Minder
Registered Person	Susan Coombs
Registered maximum number of places	5
Age range of children	Under 12
Opening hours	7:00am-6:00pm Monday to Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	24 March 2018
Dates of this inspection visit	28 November 2018 and additional feedback via telephone on 10 December 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years' education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people/children who use, or intend to use their service. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's <i>'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.'</i>
Additional Information: None.	